

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A community-based collaborative knowledge system which can be connected to a ~~plurality of client~~ terminal terminals via a network, and which supports knowledge accumulation by categorizing and accumulating messages posted from ~~the~~ [[each]] client terminal to a plurality of virtual communities, the plurality of virtual communities comprising at least a first virtual community and a second virtual community, the system comprising:

access control means for making user authentication of ~~[[a]]~~ the client terminal ~~as an access request source~~ so as to permit the client terminal to post a message; and

community processing means for managing the plurality of virtual communities, and for categorizing and accumulating messages into a plurality of topics, the messages being posted to the plurality of virtual communities from the client terminals, the client terminal terminals being granted access permission for specified topics by said access control means, said community processing means including:

message subscription type setting means for setting a first subscription type for the first virtual community and a second subscription type for the second virtual community, the first subscription type and the second subscription type each indicating the way a user subscribes to the categorized and accumulated messages in accordance with an instruction from the user,

~~wherein one of the plurality of client terminals displays a window comprising a list of the first virtual community and the second virtual community, and wherein the displayed window indicates the first subscription type comprising [[is]] browsing by a web browser for the first virtual community, and the~~
~~indicates a second subscription type comprising [[is]] using an email client for the~~
~~second virtual community, the second subscription type allowing a user to post a reply to the second virtual community by replying, using the email client, to a delivered email message containing a new posting; and~~
a processor for implementing at least the message subscription type setting means.

2. (Currently Amended) A community-based collaborative knowledge system which can be connected to a ~~plurality of client terminal terminals~~ via a network, and which supports knowledge accumulation by categorizing and accumulating messages posted from [[each]] ~~the~~ client terminal to a plurality of virtual communities, the plurality of virtual communities comprising at least a first virtual community and a second virtual community, the system comprising:

access control means for making user authentication of [[a]] ~~the~~ client terminal as an access request source so as to permit the client terminal to post a message; and

community processing means for managing the plurality of virtual communities, and for categorizing and accumulating messages into a plurality of topics, the messages being posted to the plurality of virtual communities from the client ~~terminal terminals~~ ,

the client terminal terminals being granted access permission for specified topics by said access control means, said community processing means including:

message subscription type setting means for setting a first subscription type for the first virtual community, the first subscription type indicating the way a user subscribes to the categorized and accumulated messages in accordance with an instruction from a predetermined administrator, and

display means for displaying a window comprising a list of the first virtual community and the second virtual community, the displayed window indicating the first subscription type is browsing by a web browser for the first virtual community, and indicates a second subscription type is using an email client for the second virtual community, the second subscription type allowing a user to post a reply, using the email client, to the second virtual community by replying to a delivered email message containing a new posting; and

a processor for implementing at least the message subscription type setting means.

3. (Original) A system according to claim 2, wherein the administrator is determined for each individual virtual community.

4. (Original) A system according to claim 1, wherein said message subscription type setting means sets a subscription type of each user for each individual virtual community.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Currently Amended) A community-based collaborative knowledge system which can be connected to a ~~plurality of client terminal terminals~~ via a network, and supports knowledge accumulation by categorizing and accumulating messages posted from ~~[[each]]~~ the client terminal to a plurality of virtual communities, the plurality of virtual communities comprising at least a first virtual community and a second virtual community, the system comprising:

access control means for making user authentication of ~~[[a]]~~ the client terminal as ~~an access request source~~ so as to permit the client terminal to post a message;

message subscription type setting means for setting a first subscription type for the first virtual community, the first subscription type indicating the way a user subscribes to the categorized and accumulated messages in accordance with an instruction from the user; and

community processing means for managing the plurality of virtual communities, and categorizing and accumulating messages posted, to the plurality of virtual communities, from the client terminal terminals, the client terminal terminals being granted access permission for specified topics by said access control means, said community processing means including:

reply message processing means for, when a reply email message used to post a reply message is sent back from the client terminal in response to an email

~~message comprising a header, subject, and a message text, delivering used to deliver the categorized and accumulated message to a subscriber, automatically determining whether or not the header of the reply email message includes an ID a virtual community to which the reply message should belong by analyzing a message header of the reply email message, and categorizing and accumulating the reply message based on whether the header of the reply email message includes the ID; and ([,]) a processor for implementing at least the message subscription type setting means.~~

~~wherein one of the plurality of client terminals displays a window comprising a list of the first virtual community and the second virtual community, and~~

~~wherein the displayed window indicates the first subscription type is browsing by a web browser for the first virtual community, and indicates a second subscription type is using an email client for the second virtual community, the second subscription type allowing a user to post the reply email message to the second virtual community by replying to a new posting.~~

7. (Canceled)

8. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim [[6]] 23, wherein said reply message processing means further automatically determines a topic to which the reply message should belong.

9. (Currently Amended) A message subscription type setting method in a community-based collaborative knowledge system which can be connected to a plurality of client terminal terminals via a network, and which supports knowledge accumulation by categorizing and accumulating messages posted from ~~[[each]]~~ the client terminal to a plurality of virtual communities, the plurality of virtual communities comprising at least a first virtual community and a second virtual community, the method comprising:

an access control step of making user authentication of ~~[[a]]~~ the client terminal as ~~an access request source~~ so as to permit the client terminal to post a message; and

a community processing step of managing the plurality of virtual communities, and for categorizing and accumulating messages into a plurality of topics, the messages being posted to the plurality of virtual communities from the client terminal terminals, the client terminal terminals being granted access permission for specified topics by said access control step, the community processing step including:

a message subscription type setting step of setting a first subscription type for the first virtual community and a second subscription type for the second virtual community, the first subscription type and the second subscription type each indicating the way a user subscribes to the categorized and accumulated messages in accordance with an instruction from the user,

~~wherein one of the plurality of client terminals displays a window comprising a list of the first virtual community and the second virtual community, and~~

~~wherein the displayed window indicates the first subscription type~~
comprising ~~[[is]]~~ browsing by a web browser for the first virtual community, and the

indicates a second subscription type comprising ~~[[is]]~~ using an email client for the second virtual community, the second subscription type allowing a user to post a reply to the second virtual community by replying, using the email client, to a delivered email message containing a new posting.

10. (Currently Amended) A message subscription type setting method in a community-based collaborative knowledge system which can be connected to a plurality of client ~~terminal~~ terminals via a network, and which supports knowledge accumulation by categorizing and accumulating messages posted from ~~[[each]]~~ the client terminal to a plurality of virtual communities, the plurality of virtual communities comprising at least a first virtual community and a second virtual community, the method comprising:

an access control step of making user authentication of ~~[[a]]~~ the client terminal as ~~an access request source~~ so as to permit the client terminal to post a message; and

a community processing step of managing the plurality of virtual communities, and for categorizing and accumulating messages into a plurality of topics, the messages being posted to the plurality of virtual communities from the client ~~terminal~~ terminals, the client ~~terminal~~ terminals being granted access permission for specified topics in the access control step, the community processing step including:

a message subscription type setting step of setting a first subscription type for the first virtual community, the first subscription type indicating the way a user subscribes to the categorized and accumulated messages in accordance with an instruction from a predetermined administrator, and

a display step of displaying a window comprising a list of the virtual community and the second virtual community, the displayed window indicating the first subscription type is browsing by a web browser for the first virtual community, and indicates a second subscription type is using an email client for the second virtual community, the second subscription type allowing a user to post a reply, using the email client, to the second virtual community by replying to a delivered email message containing a new posting.

11. (Original) A method according to claim 10, wherein the administrator is determined for each individual virtual community.

12. (Original) A method according to claim 9, wherein the message subscription type setting step includes the step of setting a subscription type of each user for each individual virtual community.

13. (Canceled).

14. (Currently Amended) A reply message processing method in a community-based collaborative knowledge system which can be connected to a plurality of client terminal terminals via a network, and supports knowledge accumulation by categorizing and accumulating messages posted from ~~[[each]]~~ the client terminal to a plurality of

virtual communities, the plurality of virtual communities comprising at least a first virtual community and a second virtual community, comprising:

an access control step of making user authentication of the [[a]] client terminal as an access request source so as to permit the client terminal to post a message;

a message subscription type setting step of setting a first subscription type for the first virtual community, the first subscription type indicating the way a user subscribes to the categorized and accumulated messages in accordance with an instruction from the user; and

a community processing step of managing the plurality of virtual communities, and categorizing and accumulating messages posted, to the plurality of virtual communities, from the client terminal terminals, the client terminal terminals being granted access permission for specified topics in the access control step, the community processing step including:

a reply message processing step of automatically determining, when a reply email message used to post a reply message is sent back from the client terminal in response to an email message comprising a header, subject, and a message text, delivering used to deliver the categorized and accumulated message to a subscriber, determining whether or not the header of the reply email message includes an ID, a virtual community to which the reply message should belong by analyzing a message header of the reply email message, and categorizing and accumulating the reply message based on whether the header of the reply email message includes the ID.[[.]]

~~wherein one of the plurality of client terminals displays a window comprising a list of the first virtual community and the second virtual community, and~~

~~wherein the displayed window indicates the first subscription type is browsing by a web browser for the first virtual community, and indicates a second subscription type is using an email client for the second virtual community, the second subscription type allowing a user to post a reply to the second virtual community by replying to a delivered email message containing a new posting.~~

15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim [[14]] 26, wherein the reply message processing step means includes ~~the step of~~ further automatically determining a topic to which the reply message should belong.

17. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium that stores a program used in a community-based collaborative knowledge system which can be connected to a plurality of client terminal terminals via a network, and which supports knowledge accumulation by categorizing and accumulating messages posted from [[each]] the client terminal to a plurality of virtual communities, the plurality of virtual communities comprising at least a first virtual community and a second virtual community, said program making a computer execute:

an access control step of making user authentication of ~~[[a]]~~ the client terminal as an access request source so as to permit the client terminal to post a message; and
a community processing step of managing the plurality of virtual communities, and of categorizing and accumulating messages into a plurality of topics, the messages being posted to the plurality of virtual communities from the client terminal ~~terminals~~ , the client terminal ~~terminals~~ being granted access permission for specified topics in the access control step, the community processing step including:

a message subscription type setting step of setting a first subscription type for the first virtual community and a second subscription type for the second virtual community, the first subscription type and the second subscription type each indicating the way a user subscribes to the categorized and accumulated messages in accordance with an instruction from the user,

~~wherein one of the plurality of client terminals displays a window comprising a list of the first virtual community and the second virtual community, and~~

~~wherein the displayed window indicates the first subscription type comprising~~ [[is]] browsing by a web browser for the first virtual community, and the ~~indicates a second subscription type comprising~~ [[is]] using an email client for the second virtual community, the second subscription type allowing a user to post a reply to the second virtual community by replying, using the email client, to a delivered email message containing a new posting.

18. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium that stores a program used in a community-based collaborative knowledge system which can be connected to a ~~plurality of client terminal terminals~~ via a network, and which supports knowledge accumulation by categorizing and accumulating messages posted from ~~[[each]]~~ the client terminal to a plurality of virtual communities, the plurality of virtual communities comprising at least a first virtual community and a second virtual community, said program making a computer execute:

an access control step of making user authentication of ~~[[a]]~~ the client terminal as ~~an access request source~~ so as to permit the client terminal to post a message; and

a community processing step of managing the plurality of virtual communities, and of categorizing and accumulating messages into a plurality of topics, the messages being posted to the plurality of virtual communities from the client ~~terminal terminals~~ , the client ~~terminal terminals~~ being granted access permission for specified topics in the access control step, the community processing step including:

a message subscription type setting step of setting a first subscription type for the first virtual community, the first subscription type indicating the way a user subscribes to the categorized and accumulated messages in accordance with an instruction from a predetermined administrator, and

a display step of displaying a window comprising a list of the virtual community and the second virtual community, the displayed window indicating the first subscription type is browsing by a web browser for the first virtual community, and indicates a second subscription type is using an email client for the second virtual

community, the second subscription type allowing a user to post a reply, using the email client, to the second virtual community by replying to a delivered email message containing a new posting.

19. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium that stores a program used in a community-based collaborative knowledge system which can be connected to a plurality of client terminal terminals via a network, and supports knowledge accumulation by categorizing and accumulating messages posted from ~~[[each]]~~ the client terminal to a plurality of virtual communities, the plurality of virtual communities comprising at least a first virtual community and a second virtual community, said program making a computer execute:

an access control step of making user authentication of ~~[[a]]~~ the client terminal ~~as an access request source~~ so as to permit the client terminal to post a message;

a message subscription type setting step of setting a first subscription type for the first virtual community, the first subscription type indicating the way a user subscribes to the categorized and accumulated messages in accordance with an instruction from the user; and

a community processing step of managing the plurality of virtual communities, and categorizing and accumulating messages posted, to the plurality of virtual communities, from the client terminal terminals, the client terminal terminals being granted access permission for specified topics in the access control step, the community processing step including:

a reply message processing step of ~~automatically determining~~, when a reply email message used to post a reply message is sent back from the client terminal in response to an email message comprising a header, subject, and a message text, delivering used to deliver the categorized and accumulated message to a subscriber, determining whether the header of the reply email message includes an ID, a virtual community to which the reply message should belong by analyzing a message header of the reply email message, and categorizing and accumulating the reply message based on whether the header of the reply email message includes the ID.[[.]]

~~wherein one of the plurality of client terminals displays a window comprising a list of the first virtual community and the second virtual community, and~~

~~wherein the displayed window indicates the first subscription type is browsing by a web browser for the first virtual community, and indicates a second subscription type is using an email client for the second virtual community, the second subscription type allowing a user to post a reply to the second virtual community by replying to a delivered email message containing a new posting.~~

20. (Canceled)

21. (New) A system according to claim 6, wherein the ID comprises a message ID and a thread ID.

22. (New) A system according to claim 21, wherein the reply message processing means categorizes and accumulates the reply message based on the message ID and the thread ID if it is determined that the header of the reply email message includes the message ID and the thread ID, and based on a community name and assigned number included in the subject of the reply email message if it is determined that the header of the reply email message does not include the message ID and the thread ID.

23. (New) A system according to claim 22, wherein the client terminal displays a window comprising a list of the first virtual community and the second virtual community, and

wherein the displayed window indicates the first subscription type is browsing by a web browser for the first virtual community, and indicates a second subscription type is using an email client for the second virtual community, the second subscription type allowing the user to post the reply email message to the second virtual community by replying to a new posting.

24. (New) A method according to claim 14, wherein the ID comprises a message ID and a thread ID.

25. (New) A method according to claim 24, wherein the reply message processing step categorizes and accumulates the reply message based on the

message ID and the thread ID if it is determined that the header of the reply email message includes the message ID and the thread ID, and based on a community name and assigned number included in the subject of the reply email message if it is determined that the header of the reply email message does not include the message ID and the thread ID.

26. (New) A method according to claim 25, wherein the client terminal displays a window comprising a list of the first virtual community and the second virtual community, and

wherein the displayed window indicates the first subscription type is browsing by a web browser for the first virtual community, and indicates a second subscription type is using an email client for the second virtual community, the second subscription type allowing the user to post the reply email message to the second virtual community by replying to a new posting.